

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claim 16 is pending in the present application. Claims 1-15 and 17 have all been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 16 has been rewritten in the independent form suggested in the outstanding Action and is respectfully submitted to be free of any new matter.

As the present Amendment clearly places the Application in condition for allowance without raising any new examination or search issues, entry of the present Amendment under 37 CFR § 1.116 is respectfully urged to be in order.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Lipe (U.S. Patent No. 5,548,759), Claims 10 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ryan et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,311,149, Ryan) in view of Lipe, Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Pietzold, III et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,091,765, Pietzold) in view of Lipe.

Applicants acknowledge with gratitude the indication that Claim 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of base Claim 9, there being no intervening claims.

Turning to the outstanding rejections of Claims 9-11 and 17, it is respectfully submitted that all of these rejections should be considered to be moot in light of the cancellation of these Claims 9-11 and 17.

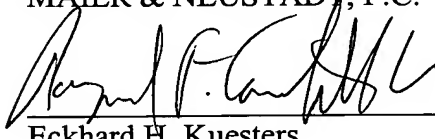
Furthermore, as noted above, the outstanding Action acknowledges that the subject matter of Claim 16 rewritten in independent form patentably distinguishes over the teachings and suggestions of Lipe, Ryan, and/or Pietzold taken alone or together in any proper combination.

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Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment this application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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